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**“Everyone Is Welcome At The Clubhouse!” Gilda’s Club Rolls Out the Welcome Mat to Chicago’s Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Community**

*Gilda’s Club Chicago and the Lesbian Community Cancer Project (LCCP) join forces to enroll the LGBT community in support groups just for them*

March 8, 2006 – Chicago – Members of the LGBT community have been among the Gilda’s Club membership since they opened their doors in 1998, becoming the city’s most comprehensive support community for men, women and children living with cancer and their family and friends. And now, in collaboration with the Lesbian Community Cancer Project, their membership will boast a new support group just for the LGBT community.

- The LGBT Wellness Group will meet every Thursday night from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Gilda’s Club Chicago located at 537 N. Wells Street. This group is for those diagnosed with cancer. People living with all types and stages of cancer share their experiences to help each other develop skills to live more fully with their illness.
- The LGBT Family and Friends Group will meet every Thursday night from 7:00 – 8:30 pm at Gilda’s Club Chicago located 537 N. Wells Street. This group is for family members and friends that are supporting a person with cancer. Members focus on their feelings and share experiences as partners, adult children and caregivers.

Both groups will be facilitated by therapists with extensive backgrounds with both LCCP and the LGBT community and will become trained in the Gilda’s Club unique approach that has helped countless individuals and their families living with cancer. Participation in these support groups begins by becoming a member of Gilda’s Club.

Membership at Gilda's Club is based on the Basic III Plus program, a personalized plan designed to enhance one's life while living with cancer. Each member creates a personalized program from four core components - Support and Networking Groups, Lectures and Workshops, Social Activities and "Plus" programs. Members choose activities from the program that are right for them.

Membership and participation in all activities is free and begins by calling (312) 464-9900.

“We are thrilled to partner with vital organizations like Gilda’s Club as they open their doors wide to the LGBT community. LCCP was founded in 1990 by women who could not find cancer support services that understood their unique needs. I am proud to say today that the premier cancer support organization in Chicago – Gilda’s Club – does understand us and has committed themselves to providing exactly what we need in the same place everyone else gets their needs met,” stated Jessica Halem, Executive Director of LCCP.

“Gilda’s Club has always been a place that welcomes everyone. We know many members of the LGBT community have come to us for our wide range of support services like yoga, cooking classes, writing workshops, and support groups and we hope these additional support groups will serve as an even greater resource of support during cancer,” said LauraJane Hyde, Executive Director of Gilda’s Club Chicago.

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Gilda's Club Chicago opened our signature red door in 1998. We provide a warm and welcoming meeting place where men, women and children diagnosed with cancer, and their family and friends, join with others to build social, emotional and informational support as an essential supplement to medical care. Membership and our program are free of charge. We offer support and networking groups, lectures, workshops and social events in our warm, home-like clubhouse.

Gilda's Club Chicago is located at 537 North Wells Street and one of 20 Clubs now open. We are a tax-exempt, non-profit 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Learn more about Gilda's Club Chicago's free program by touring our website at <http://www.gildasclubchicago.org>. For more information, please call us at 312.464.9900. At Gilda's Club Chicago, no one has to live with cancer alone.

LCCP envisions a world in which lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LBT) individuals have access to appropriate and sensitive health care and information. To this end, LCCP works with health care providers to educate them on the health needs and risks of LBT individuals. LCCP also works with LBT health care consumers to educate them on health information pertaining to their health and how to access care. LCCP is proud to serve as a conduit between providers and consumers, advocating with both for increased information and education. For more information about LCCP, please visit <http://www.lccp.org> or call (773) 561-4662.

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